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FROM: BERLIN

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 117, AUGUST 1, 6 PM

CONCER: 529  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE AUGUST 1, 1961

REVIEWED BY Houston

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DATE 8/1/61

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ACTION BONN 101, DEPARTMENT 117, INFORMATION LONDON 6C,  
MOSCOW 58, PARIS 62, BRUSSELS, COPENHAGEN, VIENNA, BERN,  
PRAGUE UNNUMBERED, POLAD USAREUR 54, THE HAGUE 1.

PARIS FOR EMBASSY, KOHLER, USRO, STOESSEL AND FINN.

REF OURTEL 97 DEPARTMENT, 83 BONN.

GDR HEALTH MINISTRY ANNOUNCED TODAY THAT BECAUSE OF POLIO THREAT FROM WEST GERMANY IT HAD REQUESTED EAST GERMAN INTERIOR MINISTRY TO TAKE MEASURES IN INTERZONAL TRAVEL "WHICH WOULD PROVIDE BEST PROTECTION FOR POPULATION." STATEMENT CARRIED IN NEUES DEUTSCHLAND AND OTHER EAST BERLIN PAPERS AUGUST ONE SAID THESE MEASURES WOULD BE SIMILAR TO THOSE ALREADY ADOPTED BY OTHER COUNTRIES NEIGHBORING ON WEST GERMANY. IT ASSERTED DECISION WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE FEDREP HAD REFUSED ACCEPT GDR OFFER OF ORAL POLIO VACCINE, AND THAT HOSPITALIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FEDREP CITIZENS VISITING EAST GERMANY WAS PROOF OF POLIO THREAT FROM WEST GERMANY.

COMMENT: ANNOUNCEMENT DID NOT DESCRIBE WHAT MEASURES WOULD BE TAKEN BY GDR, OR WHAT MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN BY OTHER COUNTRIES AGAINST WEST GERMAN TRAVEL, BUT NATIONAL ZEITUNG ASSERTED THAT DUTCH AUTHORITIES HAD PROHIBITED ENTRY TO GROUP OF WEST GERMAN CHILDREN BECAUSE OF POLIO THREAT. REGIME PRESUMABLY THINKS POLIO THREAT IS PLAUSIBLE PRETEXT FOR STRINGENT POLICE MEASURES CURBING TRAVEL EAST GERMANS.

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